

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 00267 231604Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 /074 W

-----000733 232335Z /72-65

R 231225Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8175

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

COMICEDEFOR KEFLAVIK IC

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE REYKJAVIK 0267

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, IC

SUBJECT: LABOR SITUATION IN ICELAND REMAINS UNSETTLED

REF: REYKJAVIK 0251 (DTG 171640Z FEB 78)

1. PROSPECTS FOR LABOR UNREST FOLLOWING ENACTMENT OF GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM REMAIN UNCERTAIN. SEVERAL UNIONS HAVE RENOUNCED JULY 77 WAGE AGREEMENTS AND HAVE VOICED THREAT OF STRIKES IN RETALIATION FOR LOSS OF WAGE BENEFITS EXPECTED MARCH 1 (REFTEL). NEW COMPLICATION, HOWEVER, IS THAT BJORN JONSSON, PRESIDENT OF ICELANDIC FEDERATION OF LABOR (IFL) HAS REPORTEDLY SUFFERED SERIOUS HEART ATTACK AND POSSIBLE RESULTING BRAIN DAMAGE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HIS PLACE AT HELM OF IFL HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, BY FEDERATION VICE PRESIDENT

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GUDMUNDUR SNORRI JONSSON (NO APPARENT RELATION TO BJORN).

2. ALTHOUGH SNORRI JONSSON IS MEMBER OF LEFTISTS PEOPLES ALLIANCE AND IS REPUTEDLY MORE MILITANT THAN BJORN JONSSON, HE LACKS BJORN'S INFLUENCE AND LATTER'S FOLLOWING AMONG IFL CONSTITUENT UNIONS. RESULT IS THAT HE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO EXERT LEADERSHIP NECESSARY TO

PROVIDE SOLID IFL FRONT IN ENCOURAGING ANY CONFRONTATION WITH GOVERNMENT.

3. MOREOVER, THERE ARE REPORTS OF CONSIDERABLE RELUCTANCE AMONG MANY RANK AND FILE WORKERS TO ENGAGE IN ANY POTENTIALLY ILLEGAL STRIKE ACTIVITY. ACCORDING TO SOME LOCAL SOURCES, EVEN IF WAGE AGREEMENTS ARE RENOUNCED AS OF MARCH 1, UNIONS ARE OBLIGATED TO WAIT 30 DAYS BEFORE ANNOUNCING ANY STRIKE AND UNIONS WOULD STILL HAVE TO WAIT ONE WEEK AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE ACTUAL STRIKE COULD BEGIN. THIS COULD CONCEIVABLY DELAY ANY MAJOR STRIKE ACTION UNTIL END OF FIRST WEEK OF APRIL AT EARLIEST. THIS DOES NOT OF COURSE RULE OUT WILDCAT STRIKES, ONE DAY WALKOUTS, OR OTHER POTENTIALLY ILLEGAL STRIKE ACTIONS DURING MARCH, BUT POSSIBLY ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION TO ANY SUCH STRIKE ACTIVITIES COULD STRENGTHEN HAND OF GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH THE UNIONS. MOREOVER, IF FACED BY STRIKES, GOVERNMENT COULD SEEK VOTE OF CONFIDENCE BY CALLING EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS. PROSPECT OF GOVERNMENT DOING SO IS ANOTHER FACTOR UNION LEADERSHIP WILL HAVE TO WEIGH IN DECIDING ON NEXT STEPS.

BLAKE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** LABOR, POLITICAL SITUATION  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Disposition Reason:**  
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